7138

BRITAIN revived, and under the ſmiles of Mercy, ſummoned to the Work of Praiſe.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT

NORTHAMPTON

ON

THURSDAY, Nov. 29, 1759.

Appointed to be obſerved as a

Day of General and Publick THANKSGIVING.

Publiſhed at the earneſt Requeſt of the Congregation.

By ROBERT GILBERT.

Through ev'ry Scene of Life, or Peace, or War,
Plenty or Want, thy Glory be my Care!
Shine we in Arms? Or ſing beneath our Vine?
Thine is the Vintage, and the Conqueſt thine.
Dr. YOUNG's Laſt Day.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

PSALM XXXIV. 3.

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

THERE is ſuch a reſemblance between theſe Words and the *royal proclamation*, for this day's *publick thankſgiving*, as eaſily determined my thoughts, to make them the ſubject of my addreſs on this moſt joyful occaſion. The king of *our Iſrael*, and the defender of the proteſtant faith, introduces the proclamation, to which I have referred, with his *own moſt devout and thankful acknowledgments of the great goodneſs and mercy of Almighty God, who has afforded his protection and aſſiſtance, in the juſt war, in which, for the common ſafety of theſe realms, and for diſap-*

diſappointing the boundleſs ambition of France, we are now engaged. And, having enumerated ſome of the inſtances and effects of the divine goodneſs; *and conſidering that ſuch great and publick bleſſings call for ſolemn and publick acknowledgments, he invites all his ſubjects to unite with him in ſo religious and neceſſary a duty.* Which is, in effect, ſaying, as *David* ſays in the text, *O! magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

I ſhall not take up your time, by a particular enquiry into the nature of that deliverance, or eſcape, which diſpoſed *David* to this chearful ſtrain of devotion. It will be ſufficient to obſerve, that though he was by artifice and ſtratagem preſerved from a great danger, he nevertheleſs, piouſly aſcribes his deliverance to that divine mercy, which proſpered a device, which although on comparing it with his circumſtances, it may be difficult for us entirely to juſtify, it would not become us to condemn; eſpecially when he is calling upon all, who humbly depend upon God, or who might be intereſted in the conſequences of this happy event, to join with him in acknowledging and celebrating

brating the divine goodneſs. Having premiſed this, the method in which I propoſe to proſecute the ſubject, is,

Firſt, By enquiring and conſidering what it is, to magnify the Lord and exalt his name.

Secondly, I ſhall point out ſome peculiar ſeaſons, when it is moſt congruous to do this in concert; or thoſe ſpecial occaſions, in which there ſhould be a general concurrence in religious homage and thankſgiving. And then,

Thirdly, I ſhall endeavour to excite my own, and your joy and thankfulneſs, by a recollection of ſome of thoſe ſignal bleſſings, which this day demand our moſt devout and publick acknowledgments. I am,

I. To enquire what it is to magnify the Lord and exalt his name. And here it may be neceſſary to obſerve, that the Lord is not capable of being magnified or exalted, in the ſtrict and proper ſenſe of theſe expreſſions. For being infinitely, abſolutely, and independently happy and perfect, his moſt

moſt excellent nature admits not of any higher exaltation or advancement. He is infinitely *exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe* (a). The manifeſtations of his glory, may be different at different times, and the aſcriptions of it by his creatures may vary, according to the variety of the capacities and diſpoſitions of thoſe, before whoſe Eyes his glory is diſplayed. Nevertheleſs, in himſelf and in his own nature, he was as glorious before he made any diſplays of his glory to inferior beings, or received any tribute of praiſe and ſervice from them, as he now is amidſt all the rays of illuſtrious light, that beam around him in his works, or amidſt the exalted hallelujahs of angels, which proclaim his honours in celeſtial ſtrains. And he would remain as great and glorious ſtill, were the golden harps in the angelic choir inſtantly to be ſilenced, and the ſymphony of their high acclamations never to be heard any more. For it is as much his diſtinguiſhing prerogative, not to admit of any acceſſion to, as not to ſuffer any diminution from that unbounded perfection of which he is eternally poſſeſſed.——When therefore we ſpeak

(a) Neh. ix. 5.

ſpeak of *magnifying the Lord and of exalting his name*, by our religious adorations and thankſgivings, we can mean nothing more, than that we deſire to affect our own hearts, and point out to the obſervation and admiration of others, that glorious greatneſs of which he was poſſeſſed before all worlds, and when he was without any external honour. He is the fountain of his own bleſſedneſs, and the theatre of his own glory. And to this, the adorations or acclamations of a million of worlds, much leſs the publick homage of any particular Iſland, (an aſſemblage of which *he taketh up as a very little thing*,) (a) can make no augmentation; not even ſo much as a ſingle drop to the ocean. And yet, in his adorable condeſcenſion, he is pleaſed to reckon himſelf magnified and exalted, when by the grateful acknowledgment of our dependance, and of our obligations to his favour and bleſſing, *we give unto him the glory due unto his name* (b), making mention of his name with the profoundeſt veneration, proclaiming his love with unfeigned thankfulneſs, and inviting others, as *David* did, *to taſte and ſee that the Lord is gracious* (c). Which leads me,

II. To

(a) Iſa. xl. 15. (b) 1 Chron. xvi. 29. Pſal. xxix. 1, 2, xcvi. 8. (c) Pſal. xxxiv. 8.

II. To point out ſome peculiar ſeaſons, when it is moſt congruous to do this in concert; or thoſe ſpecial occaſions upon which there ſhould be a general concurrence in this religious homage.

That private and perſonal favours demand the like acknowledgments is unqueſtionable; and families and individuals, if they have any juſt ſentiments of God in their minds, or any ingenuity of heart, will find opportunities of teſtifying their regard to their greateſt and beſt benefactor, for perſonal and family bleſſings, by the proper exerciſes of ſpiritual and ſacred gratitude and eſteem. And there is at leaſt the ſame reaſon, why bleſſings of a publick nature and influence, ſhould be acknowledged by publick and ſolemn acts of devotion and thankſgiving: And in this every individual ſhould reckon himſelf obliged to bear a ſpecial part, whenever the favour of heaven is ſignally manifeſted, either to the *religious* or *civil* community of which he is a member. Sharing in the good or evil which befals any ſociety, in which they have ſeparate as well as common intereſt; they muſt feel pleaſure or pain, according to the nature and degree of ſuch

ſuch good or evil. And, as in caſe they are perſons of a publick-ſpirit, they will ſympathize with all who love their country, in its dangers and diſtreſſes, ſo, on the other hand, they will ſincerely rejoice in its proſperity and glory. Every good ſubject who knows the value of a good government, will rejoice in its wiſe and ſucceſsful adminiſtration. And not to join with a flouriſhing and happy people, of which we ourſelves are a part, in devoutly acknowledging thoſe bleſſings, of which, through the favour of a gracious Providence, we and they are joint partakers, would in effect, be a denial, as contrary to truth as gratitude, that we are equally dependent and obliged, as the reſt of the members of that ſociety.

The Pſalmiſt in the text was too full of piety and humility to be guilty of ſuch arrogance, or contempt of divine Providence. On the contrary, he felt the emotions of religious gratitude, ſtrong and vigorous in his mind, and vehemently deſired, (as is natural in ſuch a caſe,) that others might entertain the ſame ſentiments, and feel the ſame emotions as he felt. *O! magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I*

ſought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears (a). Before the happy event, on account of which he ſummonſes them to thankſgiving, it ſeems, *he had ſought the Lord.* And it was a comfort to him to reflect that he had ſo done, even when he was rejoicing with thankfulneſs in the firſt fruits of his ſupplications. In like manner, the father of *our Iſrael* appointed ſolemn *faſts*, for imploring the divine protection and bleſſing on his arms, and on his kingdoms. And we joined the ſolemn aſſemblies, in hopes, that our God would turn our humiliations into gladneſs, and the ſubjects of our prayers into ſubjects of praiſe. And I congratulate you on the arrival of a day, wherein we are called to bear a part, with the reſt of the *Britiſh* churches, in this moſt delightful work.——A work, not indeed confined to ſuch happy times, and yet peculiarly ſeaſonable at ſuch times, when we have received ſignal teſtimonies of God's providential goodneſs, either in a remarkable deliverance, or in other favourable events. And we ſhould then be moſt inexcuſable, if, from hearts warmed with gratitude, we did

(a) Ver. 4.

did not break out into the moſt explicit acknowledgments of the divine goodneſs and mercy; becauſe, as the circumſtances themſelves call for praiſe, ſo they ſhould beget a diſpoſition in us to the performance of this duty; and common decency and ingenuity may well upbraid us, if the tongue, thus prompted, did not of itſelf (as it were) break forth into the language of heaven. If therefore thankſgiving is in a peculiar manner the duty of ſome times, may I not hope for your concurrence with me in this work, while I endeavour, as I propoſed,

III. To excite your ſacred joy and thankfulneſs, by a recollection and rehearſal of ſome of thoſe ſignal bleſſings, which, this day, call for our moſt ſolemn and publick acknowledgments. It was with a ſorrowful ſpirit that I attempted to lay before you the ſtate of our affairs in the days of our ſolemn humiliation. And you will remember, how I endeavoured to awaken in you a religious and penitential concern; and with what earneſtneſs and ſolicitude of ſoul we addreſſed ourſelves to the throne of God, when his Providence frowned upon theſe

kingdoms, running (as it were) *under the ſhadow of his wings, to put our truſt in him, till thoſe calamities, with which we were then alarmed, ſhould be overpaſt* (a). And it is with an exaltation of joy, proportioned to thoſe ſad apprehenſions, that I would now invite you *to magnify the Lord with me. We ſought the Lord, and he heard us. And his merciful deliverance from* a great part, if not from *all our fears* (b), is a juſt reaſon, why we ſhould *exalt his name together.*

Since the commencement of the preſent war, and after *we had faſted and made many prayers* (c), we had the affliction of finding ourſelves under the rebukes of Providence. And he whoſe favour we unitedly and repeatedly entreated; inſtead of *bleſſing* us, awfully *blaſted* our beſt concerted enterprizes and undertakings, in ſeveral parts of the world. It is true, we were happy in the lengthened life of the beſt of princes, who was meditating and contriving for a vigorous exertion of the national ſtrength, in the vindication of the injured rights of our dear country. And he, our good King, was unanimouſly ſupported in his great and good deſigns,

(a) Pſ. lvii. 1. Iſa. xxvi. 20. (b) Ver. 4.
(c) Iſa. i. 15.

deſigns, by the hearty concurrence of ſenate and people. But, notwithſtanding our moſt ſanguine expectations, almoſt every plan we formed, failed in the execution. And our formidable forces both by ſea and land, contributed little to the real ſervice of our country, the ſecurity of our *American Colonies*, or the ſucceſs of our *Proteſtant Allies*. But, at the ſame time that we were taught the value of *continental connections*, by ſeeing them weakened, and in ſome part actually broken, our *troops* were almoſt intirely inactive; and, while the *ſquadrons of our enemies* went out, and came in with ſafety, *our own* returned not only without victory and honour, but ſometimes with infamy and reproach.

But, *O! magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together*, for the happy reverſe of theſe diſappointments, and for the wiping away from us our reproach among the people. We were ready to aſk, *where are all the wonders of which our fathers had told us* (a)? And with a melancholy dejection, to ſpeak of *the years of the right-hand of the moſt high* (b), as times of publick felicity, which we could hardly hope to ſee a re-

(a) Pſal. xliv. 1. (b) Pſal. lxxvii. 10.

a return of in our days. But our God has revived for us, not his *ſtrange work* (a) of *judgment*, but his ancient and more delightful work of mercy, which by a ſeries of extraordinary events has diſtinguiſhed this memorable year, as the favourite æra in the hiſtory of *Great Britain*. In rehearſing the acts of the Lord, it is difficult for me to know, where to begin the detail. I might refer you to thoſe publick and authentic declarations which have come from the throne and from the ſenate, in order to form your ſentiments of the happy turn of our national affairs, and the preſent flouriſhing ſtate of theſe kingdoms. And that this is the ſenſe of the nation in general, as well as of their repreſentatives in parliament, is evident from that univerſal ſatisfaction in the publick management and adminiſtration, which we daily obſerve amongſt all ranks and orders of men, ſo that the conviction of our uncommon proſperity is ſo ſenſibly ſeen, as to have left no room for difference of opinion. What a hearty zeal do all men among us diſcover againſt the continued menaces of *France*, and for the ſtrenuous defence of the common

(a) Iſaiah xxviii. 21.

common cauſe of our religion and liberty? How ſpeedily and how chearfully are the neceſſary ſupplies for ſupport of the war granted and contributed? what readineſs and reſolution do men expreſs for continuing them, till it ſhall be in our power to oblige that exaſperated and perfidious foe to ſuch a juſt and honourable peace, as it ſhall not be in his power to violate?

It may ſeem, perhaps, to ſome who hear me, as if this were beyond my province, and that in ſpeaking to you of ſtate affairs, I am acting beſide my character. But the duty of this day requires me to lay before you, a ſummary of the cauſes we have for public thankſgiving, in the account and enumeration of which theſe cannot be entirely omitted. And, when the Lord has done ſuch great things for us, it is fit we ſhould bear our publick and united teſtimony to the glory of the divine goodneſs, in every appearance of it in our favour, and to expreſs our ſatisfaction in that good government, whoſe counſels and arms it has ſo ſignally bleſſed, for the eſtabliſhment and proſperity of theſe kingdoms.

The preamble of the proclamation, appointing the ſolemn aſſemblies of this day, ſets forth the *juſtice* of the war, in which we are engaged, *for the common ſafety of theſe realms.* This, a principle of ſelf-preſervation, and a neceſſary regard to our moſt valuable intereſts, required us to undertake. It was *for our people and the cities of our God*, and for the ſecurity of our colonies and plantations, our navigation and commerce, none of which could be ſafe againſt the bold incroachments and boundleſs ambition of *France*, which aſpired at nothing ſhort of univerſal dominion. Whoever therefore underſtands his own, or hath a proper regard to the publick ſafety and happineſs, muſt ſee cauſe, why we ſhould magnify the Lord, and exalt his name together, if he had only *protected* us, in his mercy, from the miſchievous attempts of that implacable enemy of our country, who has ſo frequently ſtrove to root us out, that we might be no more a people, or, at leaſt, a free and flouriſhing people. Merely to be protected, I ſay, from ſuch a reſtleſs and aſpiring enemy, who has looked upon us with ſo envious and malicious an eye, without being

being able to make us her prey, is ſufficient to inſpire every conſiderate heart with ſentiments of religious gratitude.——But *O! magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.* For he has moreover, in his unſpeakable goodneſs, granted us his *aſſiſtance to our arms*, crowning them, *both by ſea and land, with ſignal ſucceſs.* And which of us does not *ſee and devoutly adore*, (as his Majeſty piouſly expreſſes it, in his late ſpeech to both houſes of parliament,) the hand of divine providence in the happy progreſs of our ſucceſſes, from the taking of *Goree* on the coaſt of *Africa*, to the conqueſt of ſo many important places in *America?* —— with the defeat of the *French* army in *Canada*, and the reduction of their capital city of *Quebec*, —— effected with ſo much honour to the courage and conduct of his Majeſty's officers, both at ſea and land, and with ſo great a luſtre to his intrepid forces,—together with the important ſucceſs, obtained by the *Britiſh* fleet off *Cape Lagos*,—and the blocking up, for ſo many months, the principal part of the navy of *France*, in their own ports. Nay, we are capable of tracing the footſteps of divine Providence to as remote a quarter

as the *Eaſt-Indies*, where the dangerous deſigns of our enemies againſt us, have miſcarried; and that valuable branch of our trade has received great benefit and protection. I muſt alſo mention to you the repulſe and defeat of the whole *French* army in the plains of *Minden*, under the conduct of his Majeſty's illuſtrious General, *Prince* FERDINAND *of Brunſwick*, —— a battle, fought againſt every advantage of ſituation and ſuperiority of numbers, and yet with ſuch ſignal, and at the ſame time ſuch ſeaſonable ſucceſs, as highly elevated our joys, even to exultation, and preſents itſelf, this day, as one of the more important ſubjects of our admiration and thankſgiving. Nor can we forget the continued protection and aſſiſtance given to our proteſtant ally, the *King of Pruſſia*, who is ſtill amazingly ſupported againſt the formidable combination of empires, ſurrounding him on all ſides, and threatning to ſwallow him up quick. But an omnipotent arm has preſerved him in the moſt imminent dangers, and, we hope, will ſtill ſtrengthen and enable him to make a glorious ſtand againſt his and our enemies.

I know,

I know, it is too natural for men to flatter themſelves with the imagination that ſuch happy events are the effects of their own wiſdom, or the rewards of their own valour or virtue. But, if there is a God who made the world, he certainly governs it. And upon a ſurvey of the works of nature and Providence, we meet with evident traces of both. Whoever attentively conſiders the ſeries only of his own leſſer concerns, will aſſuredly be furniſhed with ſufficient matter of praiſe and thankfulneſs, in the contemplation of that watchful and gracious Providence, which has preſided over him, and carried him through a variety of dangers and difficulties, by which he had been frequently precipated to deſtruction, had he not been preſerved by a ſecret and divine hand. And, if the wiſdom and goodneſs of divine Providence is ſo obſervable, as it muſt be confeſſed to be, in the ſafety and ſucceſs of private perſons, we muſt believe it to be converſant in a more eſpecial manner about the councils and arms of Princes. We aſſuredly believe, that it is God *who giveth ſalvation to Kings, and delivereth from the hurt-*

ful ſword (a); *That he ſaveth us from our enemies, and putteth them to confuſion that hate us. Wiſdom and might are his, and he changeth the times and the ſeaſons* (b). *He is Governor among the nations* (c) *and he ruleth unto the ends of the earth. The Lord encreaſeth the nations and deſtroyeth them. He enlargeth nations and ſtraighteneth them again* (d). *The race is not always to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong; neither yet bread to the wiſe; nor yet riches to men of underſtanding; nor yet favour to men of ſkill; for who knoweth not in all theſe, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this* (e)? He directs and ſupports thoſe beings, that act according to their own nature. And though in many of theſe operations his Providence is leſs diſcernible, yet it is ſtill the ſpring of the whole machine, which governs all, more eſpecially its moſt important motions. It may therefore certainly be concluded, to have the direction and guidance of thoſe councils and arms, in the ſucceſs of which not only mighty kingdoms are intereſted, but the honour of God is more immediatly con-

(a) Pſ. cxliv. 10. (b) Dan. ii. 20, 21. (c) Pſ. xxii. 28.
(d) Job xii. 23. (e) Eccleſ. ix. 11. Job. xii. 9. Iſai. xli. 20.

concerned. If then our plans have been well concerted, and our arms have been crowned with victory, it will be no derogation from the honour of thoſe, who have been moſt eminent, either for counſel, or courage, or conduct, if we raiſe our thoughts above all human inſtruments, in adoration and thankfulneſs to the Allwiſe and Almighty *God, the God of all power and glory, who makes the prudent wiſe, and the valiant ſtrong for himſelf. Some truſt in chariots, and ſome in horſes, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They are brought down and fallen, but we are riſen and ſtand upright* (a). And while we magnify and exalt his name, as we do this day, what a luſtre does it add to the chearfulneſs of our countenances, and what vigour to the joy of our hearts, to contemplate the ſupreme wiſdom and goodneſs, as ſmiling upon our deſigns, aiding the generous and united efforts of our princes and miniſters, of our commanders and forces by ſea and land, for the defence and the honour of our country, and for accompliſhing before our admiring eyes thoſe arduous and important undertakings, which

(a) Pſal. xx. 7, 8.

which ſeemed far out of the compaſs of our arms when moſt proſperous and renowned, how much more then, in a time when they had been diſgraced as well as diſappointed.

We ſhall ſee further occaſion to magnify the Lord, if we conſider, that, while the war has been carrying on abroad, with ſo much advantage and honour to our native land, we have been bleſſed (by the unmerited favour of providence,) with ſuch uninterrupted tranquility in our own borders, and have enjoyed as much internal peace, as if we had not been concerned in the war. Favoured *Britain*, bleſſed be God, is not yet become the theatre, on which ſuch tragedies are acted, as have laid waſte ſo great a part of the *European continent*, (not to ſpeak of thoſe which have been acted in more diſtant countries.) And Oh! with what lamentation and woe? what carnage? what bloodſhed? what rapine? what ſpoils? what ſackings? what burnings? what deſolations? what terrifying threats, enforced by the moſt horrid oaths, and by inſtruments of torture and death, to extort diſcoveries of the concealed wealth and treaſure, nay perhaps, of the neceſſary food and raiment of the wretched inhabitants?

habitants? Many of them lately rejoiced, as we do, in being bleſſed with the various conveniencies and delights of life; but are now ſo deſtitute, as to be forced to wander from their habitations into woods, and mountains, and caves, where they run the riſk of famine, and truſt for ſafety to the mercy of beaſts, that they may find a hiding place from the cruelties of men. Friends, brethren, countrymen, I congratulate you this day, and *O! magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together*, for ſtill preſerving our dear land from theſe horrors, notwithſtanding the threats and boaſts of our enemies. We have not yet ſeen an enemy at our gates, nor on our coaſts, (except ſuch of them as are our lawful and diſarmed captives;) nor do we experimentally know, what is meant by *dragooning* in our houſes. We have not been ſtruck into a phrenzy or delirium by finding ourſelves under the ſad neceſſity of flying with our lives in our hands; or of abandoning our wives and our little ones, bathed in tears, or weltering in their blood.

We might now have been lamenting, (had we lived to be witneſſes of ſuch ſcenes,) "A while ago I and my family in this pleaſant

" ſant land, were in ſafety and in peace, and " poſſeſſed of all that we could wiſh. But " alas! now I am ſtripped of all! A few " days ago, I ſlept quietly in my own habi- " tation, and had peaceful ſlumbers upon " my bed. But now I have no where to " lay my head! This and that dear and " tender name is now no more! One is " mortally wounded, another barbarouſly " murdered, and others impriſoned or car- " ried captive!" Happy *Britons!* remember with thankfulneſs, who it is that makes and continues us this happy people, that we hear not the ſhouts of the ſpoiler in our borders, nor behold their inſtruments of death and torture. Our houſes and our churches are ſafe from fear, and not flaming or falling over our heads. *We ſit under our own vines and our own fig-trees*, and none makes us afraid. There are no outcries or ſhrieks in our dwellings, or in our ſtreets, nor any heart-felt throbs or pangs in our breaſts. Theſe are familiar ſcenes in countries where the rage of war is let looſe. Let us therefore put on bowels of compaſſion, for thoſe who feel the edge of the devouring ſword; and regarding and adoring the divine goodneſs

neſs and mercy, which has appointed ſo much more favourable a lot, let us confeſs and revere *the ſeverity and goodneſs of God—on them, which have fallen under his heavier ſcourge, ſeverity: but happy* Britain! *towards thee—goodneſs, if thou continue in his goodneſs. Otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off* (a).

Let me add as another cauſe of thankfulneſs, the union which reigns among ourſelves. This we muſt aſcribe to the ſame gracious and omnipotent author, *who ſtills the tumults of the people*, as well as is the ſource of whatever elſe is agreeable in our ſtate. It is owing to the benign influence of the God of peace, who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and knows how to ſoften and moderate their moſt turbulent and irregular ferments, that we are in ſuch a happy degree cured of our party-diviſions; that we are united in approving the meaſures taken for humbling the common enemy; and that loyalty and good affection to the beſt of princes, is ſo evidently become the temper of the nation. In this reſpect happy *Britons* ſeem to have taken the caſt of *the people of Iſrael*, when *Solomon* diſmiſſed them from the feaſt of dedication.

(a) Rom. xi. 22.

dication. On which occaſion *they bleſſed the king, and went into their tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodneſs that God had done for David his ſervant, and for Iſrael his people* (a). May he furniſh us ſtill with new demonſtrations of his power and mercy, and may he furniſh us with hearts more united to each other in brotherly affection, and to him our Almighty and unwearied benefactor in the moſt ſublime acts of gratitude and praiſe!

Bear with me, while I remind you at leaſt, of one more mercy and cauſe of thankſgiving; and the rather, as it is expreſsly recommended from the throne, in the preamble to the proclamation, which has ſummoned us this day, *to enter into the gates of the Lord with thankſgiving, and into the courts of our God with praiſe, to be thankful unto him and bleſs his name.* It is *the Lord's having moſt ſeaſonably granted us at this time, an uncommonly plentiful harveſt.* He *crowneth the year with his goodneſs and all his paths drop fatneſs. They dropped upon the paſtures of the wilderneſs, and the little hills rejoiced on every ſide. The paſtures were clothed with flocks;*

(a) 1 Kings vii. 66.

flocks; the valleys alſo were covered over with corn; they ſhouted for joy, they alſo ſang (a). *The Lord gave us rain, both the former and the latter rain in his ſeaſon, and reſerved unto us the appointed weeks of the harveſt, that men might gather in their corn, and hath filled our hearts with food and gladneſs* (b). It is from the divine goodneſs, that we have our yearly corn and our daily bread. And we ought to thank God for his having provided for us in his great liberality, all the years and days of our lives. But, if (contrary to this) the commonneſs of the bleſſing, ſhould at ſome times lead us to value it the leſs, yet we muſt confeſs, we owe ſo much a larger tribute for this year's extraordinary plenty, after ſo great and threatning a ſcarcity, and ſhould be doubly inexcuſable, were we to forget our divine benefactor, now he has diſpelled our fears, and ſo liberally provided for us. This is ſo marvellous and ſeaſonable a teſtimony of his bounty, that we cannot ſufficiently admire and adore the kind providence, *who ſo abundantly bleſſes our proviſion, and ſatisfies our poor with bread* (c).

 Yea,

(a) Pſal. lxv. 11, 12, 13. (b) Jer. v. 24. Acts xiv. 17.
(c) Pſal. cxxxii. 15.

Yea, to our *poor the goſpel is preached.* To happy *Britons the bread of life is broken, to nouriſh us up unto eternal life* (a). The tabernacle of the Lord is ſet up among us, and his table is ſpread in the midſt of us. We have *Moſes* and the prophets, Chriſt and his apoſtles, *read in our ſynagogues every ſabbath-day*, and know not, by experience, what it is to be diſmayed or diſturbed in our ſolemn aſſemblies. And have we not much reaſon to be thankful to God, and the mild adminiſtration of government, under which he has placed us, for the liberty we enjoy, civil and religious, and the precious opportunities granted us for improvement in the ſpiritual temper, and the divine life, in order to our being fitted for a bleſſed and glorious immortality? *Our God makes known to us his ſtatutes and his judgments, and has not dealt ſo with other nations.*

Let us therefore put a true value upon theſe ineſtimable bleſſings, which ſeverally carry on them ſuch ſhining characters of the gracious and tender care of our God for us. And ſince our rights and poſſeſſions have been ſo effectually ſecured to us at home,

(a) John vi. 33.

home, and our concerns and intereſts abroad are every where ſafe, and in ſo many places proſperous and triumphant, — ſince our enemies have failed in their undertakings, and moſt of ours have ſo happily ſucceeded, and our land army, and naval force, after all their hazards, and our acquiſitions, remain in full ſtrength, let us look abroad and ſee, if there be any other nation under heaven, which has ſuch bleſſings to be thankful for; or of whom ſuch an account will be required, as will certainly be required of us, if we ſhould be found wanting in thankfulneſs and improvement. For any of us to forget what the Lord our God has done for us, in bleſſing us with ſuch a ſeries of remarkable advantages and ſucceſſes, would argue, that we want not only the hearts of chriſtians, but the underſtandings of men. Let us therefore endeavour to get our minds poſſeſſed with becoming ſentiments of our obligation to our divine benefactor. And let it be our continual care, not only *to magnify and exalt his name with our lips*, but to manifeſt the ſincerity of theſe verbal acknowledgments, by the future obedience of our *lives*.

It is much to be feared, that, while we were under the rebukes of Providence, their great deſign (I mean, a national reformation) was but very imperfectly accompliſhed. Would it not be difficult to mention one publick vice that has been entirely diſcarded or ſuppreſſed? One corrupt humour expelled, or one criminal gratification given up? Do we not behold the ſame abominations, and the ſame iniquities perpetrated and perſiſted in, with as much greedineſs and ſtubbornneſs as ever? And even among men who make the moſt publick profeſſion of religion, how few have appeared to regard, as they ought, the divine judgments viſiting for theſe things? This conſideration enhances the divine goodneſs, which, notwithſtanding we have been deaf to the voice of the rod, has renewed to us afreſh the allurements of mercy. If therefore we are wanting in that religious awe, which his more alarming diſpenſations had a tendency to produce, let it never be ſaid that we are ſo hardened as to deſpiſe the riches of his goodneſs. It would be ſad indeed, if we ſhould be as wanting of ingenuity and gratitude, as it is too evident we have been of a hum-

a humble fear and a religious dread, when we were called by his judgments to humiliation and repentance, for our own, and the ſins of our people. Now is the time, in this ſunſhine of his reviving favour, for our increaſing and abounding in the fruits of holineſs and goodneſs. And from the example which he has ſet us, by his own beneficence, our converſation ſhould be ſo ordered, that we may not provoke him to act towards us, *as if he repented of what he has done for us* (a). Let us remember the ſolemn vows, which we were ready to make him in the days of our diſtreſs, leſt he ſhould be incenſed againſt us, by our hypocriſy and inconſiſtent conduct herein, and hide his face, and withdraw his protection and bleſſing. For, be it known and well conſidered, he *whoſe ways are paſt finding out* (b), can bring ruin and deſtruction upon us, by the laſt efforts of the hitherto defeated rage of our enemies; or even by means, which, according to the probabilities of things, we have leſs reaſon to apprehend.

Though we have therefore been fluſhed with victories and acquiſitions of the laſt impor-

(a) Jer. xviii. 10. (b) Job ix. 10.

importance; though we ought to be very thankful, and may innocently indulge to unuſual tranſports on ſo great an occaſion, yet we muſt *rejoice with trembling* (a). How far then are thoſe from being rightly diſpoſed, who ſuffer their joy to degenerate into extravagance, prophaneneſs, or preſumption, and who proſtitute the bleſſings of heaven, in the criminal exceſſes of riot and luſt? *The harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feaſts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither conſider the operations of his hands* (b).

Our joy, as well as our ſorrow, ſhould be *of the godly ſort*, and productive of the ſame fruits. And theſe beginnings of mercy, if we do not forfeit them, will afford an agreeable encouragement to our hopes, that we ſhall ſoon *be delivered from all our fears*, and behold our national happineſs compleat and eſtabliſhed.

Let us therefore continue to wait upon God with our *prayers*, as well as our *praiſes*. *Call upon me*, ſays he, *in the day of trouble, I will hear thee: and thou ſhalt glorify me* (c). We have been taking this preſcribed courſe; have

(a) Pſal. ii. 11. (b) Iſa. v. 12. (c) Pſal. l. 15.

have been calling upon God, who hath heard and delivered us; and we are glorifying and exalting his name. And, in order to the continuance of this delightful work, we muſt perſevere in the ſame courſe of duty, and ſeek from his experienced favour and goodneſs, freſh matter for joy and adoration. The judgments of God ſhould awaken, and his alluring goodneſs ſhould lead us to repentance. And, if the ways of God have this happy effect upon our country, he will regard us as a people formed for himſelf, and give us a name and a praiſe among the nations of the earth. We may then hope to ſee the bleſſing of peace reſtored and eſtabliſhed, upon ſuch terms as ſhall be ſolid and honourable to *Great-Britain*, and with ſuch advantages, as ſhall bring with them full ſecurity for the time to come.

May the Lord of hoſts, who fights our battles for us, continue to proſper us in this juſt and neceſſary war, that it may be carried on, in all parts, with encreaſing vigour and effect; and may he prepare us for rejoicing in its termination, with advantages to ourſelves, and thoſe in alliance with us,

ſuperior to any we have yet ſeen! and, by the influence of his ſpirit, by the councils of his word, by the diſpenſations of his providence, and by his ordinances which are ſtill in the midſt of us, prepare us for that happier world, where the redeemed of the Lord ſhall lift up their heads rejoicing, and warble forth their ſongs of victory and triumph, in everlaſting conſort with the hallelujahs of angels, aſcribing all the honours of their crowns and palms, and all the glory and joy of their celeſtial ſtate, to the inſearchable riches of the grace and mercy of God and their redeemer, whoſe is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

4 OC 58

The End of the Sermon.

A HYMN.

A HYMN.

I.

COME, happy *Britons*, tell your joys,
And in a chearful ſong
Let our unuſual tranſports riſe
From every heart and tongue.

II.

Riſe up above the heavenly hills,
Whence all our mercies flow;
And whence our God that dew diſtills,
Which makes our laurels grow.

III.

Not by our might did we obtain
The trophies we have won,
But triumph both by land and main,
Becauſe He gives the crown.

IV.

Grateful we caſt it at his feet,
And all our trophies ſpread
Votive to him, who *Britain*'s fleet
And troops to conqueſt led.

V.

In diſtant lands and diſtant ſeas,
For us, his arm's confeſs'd,

And

And makes us taſte the ſweets of peace
And in our borders reſt.

VI.

Our coaſts he ſaves from hoſtile bands;
And while his ſavour ſhields;
Abundant crops, at his commands,
Adorn our ſmiling fields.

VII.

He ſatisfies our hungry poor,
And ſtrangers ſhare our bread;
And captive thouſands from our ſtore,
Deny'd their own, are fed.

VIII.

Then let us his high praiſes ſpread,
Who, to exalt the ſtrain,
Of *George*'s life extends the thread,
And glory of his reign.

IX.

Perfect, good God, what thou haſt wrought,
And balmy peace reſtore;
And liberty, with bleſſings fraught,
O'er all the Nations pour!

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X.

Let love and gratitude employ
The remnant of our days;
And friends and foes partake our joy,
And help us ſhout thy praiſe.

THE END.